

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT LOUIS 1129

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PIMT MP
SUBJECT: MAURITIAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS: POST ELECTORAL
ROUND-UP DECEMBER 23

SUMMARY: THE FINAL OUTCOME FOR THE 62 ASSEMBLY SEATS DECIDED ON
DECEMBER 20 WAS:

MMM 30 SEATS
IP 25 SEATS
PMSD 7 SEATS

IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE EIGHT "BEST LOSER" SEATS TO BE AWARDED ON
DECEMBER 24 WILL RESULT IN AN ASSEMBLY MADE UP AS FOLLOWS:

MMM 34 SEATS
IP 28 SEATS
PMSD 8 SEATS

MANEUVERING OVER FORMATION OF THE NEXT GOVERNMENT IS IN FULL SWING.
PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM SAYS THE MMM CANNOT RULE AS A MINORITY
GOVERNMENT SO HE PLANS TO FORM THE GOVERNMENT HIMSELF, PRESUMABLY
WITH PMSD SUPPORT. THE MMM SAYS IT PLANS TO FORM THE GOVERNMENT AS A
MINORITY, AND TO GO TO ELECTIONS IF IT FINDS THAT IT CANNOT CARRY
OUT ITS PROGRAM FROM A MINORITY POSITION. A LABOR-PMSD COALITION
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WITH A MAJORITY OF ONE SEAT (36 TO 34) WOULD APPEAR TO BE THE MOST
LIKELY INITIAL STEP IN FORMATION OF A GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY

1. FINAL RESULTS IN THE TWO DISTRICTS WHERE RETURNS WERE
INCOMPLETE YESTERDAY PRODUCED THE OUTCOME EXPECTED: 3 INDEPENDENCE
PARTY CANDIDATES, INCLUDING PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM, WON SEATS IN

DISTRICT 5, AND THE RECOUNT IN DISTRICT 14 CONFIRMED THE VICTORY OF TWO INDEPENDENCE PARTY CANDIDATES AND ONE MMM CANDIDATE. THE OVERALL OUTCOME FOR THE 62 SEATS DECIDED IN THE VOTING ON DECEMBER 20 IS THEREFORE CONFIRMED AS:

MMM 30 SEATS

IP 25 SEATS

PMSD 7 SEATS

RAMGOOLAM RAN FAR AHEAD IN HIS DISTRICT, RECEIVING 56 PERCENT OF THE VOTE. THIS WAS, HOWEVER, A COME-DOWN FROM THE 1967 ELECTIONS, WHEN HE WON 67 PERCENT OF THE VOTE.

2. PRELIMINARY FIGURES ON THE POPULAR VOTE NATIONWIDE ARE AS FOLLOWS

PARTY	POPULAR VOTE	PERCENTAGE OF SEATS WON
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MMM	40 PERCENT	48 PERCENT
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IP	36 PERCENT	40 PERCENT
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PMSD	17 PERCENT	12 PERCENT
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OTHERS	6 PERCENT	0
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3. THE SMALL PARTIES DID NOT COME CLOSE TO ELECTING EVEN A SINGLE CANDIDATE. THEIR ONLY INFLUENCE ON THE CAMPAIGN WAS THAT HAWOLDAR PROBABLY COST THE INDEPENDENCE PARTY TWO SEATS IN THE FLACQ DISTRICT WHERE HE RAN, AND THE UDM PROBABLY COST THE PMSD ONE SEAT IN BEAU BASSIN. THE MMM ALSO CLAIMS THAT THE MMMSP LOST ITS TWO SEATS IN QUATRE BORNES.

4. THE EIGHT "BEST LOSER" SEATS WILL BE DECIDED ON DECEMBER 24.

IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT FOUR OF THEM WILL GO TO THE MMM, THREE TO THE INDEPENDENCE PARTY AND ONE TO THE PMSD. THE MAKE-UP OF THE ASSEMBLY IS THEREFORE LIKELY TO BE:

MMM 34 SEATS

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IP 28 SEATS

PMSD 8 SEATS

THE CHINESE SEAT IS LIKELY TO GO THE PROFESSOR LIM FAT OF THE PMSD. AMONG THE OTHERS WHO HAVE A GOOD CHANCE OF OBTAINING "BEST LOSER" SEATS ARE: FOREIGN MINISTER SIR HAROLD WALTER, THE EDITOR OF THE MMM'S LE MILITANT SYDNEY SELVON, AND YOUSUF MOHAMED, SON OF THE LEADER OF THE MUSLIM COMMITTEE FOR ACTION.

5. BOTH RAMGOOLAM OF THE LABOR PARTY AND BERENGER OF THE MMM CLAIM THEY ARE GOING TO FORM THE NEXT GOVERNMENT. RAMGOOLAM HAS ALREADY CALLED ON THE GOVERNOR GENERAL TO DISCUSS THE MATTER. DESPITE THE SERIOUS LOSSES SUFFERED BY THE LABOR PARTY, RAM WAS IN GOOD HUMOR FOLLOWING THE CONFIRMATION OF HIS VICTORY IN HIS TRIOLET DISTRICT. HE REMARKED TO THE PRESS THAT HE HAD "LOST A LOT OF HIS MINISTERS". IN HIS VIEW ONLY THE LABOR PARTY AND THE MMM SURVIVED THE ELECTIONS. HE CHARGED THAT THERE "WAS A CONSPIRACY OF LIES" AGAINST THE LABOR PARTY, BUT HE

ADMITTED THAT WHEREVER HIS PARTY ENJOYED SUCCESS IT WAS Owing to the new, young candidates it had presented. RAMGOOLAM STATED THAT THE MMM CANNOT GOVERN AS A MINORITY PARTY IN THE ASSEMBLY, AND IT IS THEREFORE ONLY LOGICAL THAT HE WILL FORM THE NEXT GOVERNMENT. THE PRIME MINISTER'S PAPER, ADVANCE, HAS STATED OPENLY THAT THE LABOR PARTY AND THE PMSD, HAVING FOUGHT TOGETHER AGAINST THE MMM DURING THE CAMPAIGN, WILL COLLABORATE IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT. RAMGOOLAM HAS STATED THAT HE IS READY TO WORK WITH THE PMSD, BUT IT IS UP TO THAT PARTY TO APPROACH HIM FIRST.

6. MMM LEADER BERENGER, PARTY PRESIDENT AND SHADOW PRIME MINISTER JUGNAUTH, AND LE MILITANT HAVE ALL DECLARED THAT THE MMM WILL FORM THE NEXT GOVERNMENT. THE MMM IS OPENLY TALKING OF OFFERING A FIGUREHEAD PRESIDENCY TO RAMGOOLAM, BUT THE ANTI-MMM PRESS BELIEVES HE WOULD REFUSE SUCH AN OFFER. ACCORDING TO THE MMM LEADERSHIP, WHICH HAS BEEN MEETING CONSTANTLY SINCE THE ELECTION RESULT BECAME KNOWN, CONFIDENTIAL

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THERE IS NO CHANCE OF THE MMM TRYING TO FORM A COALITION WITH ANY OTHER PARTY. THEY WISH TO RULE THE COUNTRY AS A MINORITY GOVERNMENT, AND IF THEY ARE UNSUCCESSFUL IN THAT EFFORT, THEY PLAN TO RETURN TO THE ELECTORATE WITH FULL CONFIDENCE THAT THEY WILL WIN A MANDATE.

7. IN SPEAKING TO HIS SUPPORTERS FOLLOWING HIS VICTORY IN QUATRE BORNES, BERENGER EXPRESSED REGRET THAT A FOURTH SEAT IN THAT DISTRICT WAS NOT AVAILABLE FOR MAURICE LESAGE OF THE UDM. HE LATER EXPLAINED HIS EMOTIONAL BREAKDOWN ON THAT OCCASION AS BEING CAUSED BY THE DEFEAT OF HIS TWO RUNNING MATES, ESPECIALLY SHELIA BAPPOO, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE PARTY, WHO HE SAID HAD DONE SO MUCH FOR THE MMM ESPECIALLY DURING THE PERIOD WHEN HE AND OTHER MILITANTS WERE IN JAIL. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MRS. BAPPOO, SYDNEY SELVON AND A FEW OTHERS, THE LEADERSHIP OF THE MMM EMERGED FROM THE ELECTIONS PRETTY MUCH INTACT. THE FOLLOWING MMM LEADERS WON IN THE ASSEMBLY:
ANEEROOD JUGNAUTH-PARTY PRESIDENT AND SHADOW PRIME MINISTER
PAUL BERENGER-SECRETARY-GENERAL AND SHADOW MINISTER OF FINANCE, ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT
KADER BHAYAT- VICE PRESIDENT AND SHADOW LABOR MINISTER
MRS. SHIREEN CZIFFRA - VICE PRESIDENT AND SHADOW MINISTER FOR WOMEN'S AFFAIRS
JEAN CLAUDE DE L'ESTRAC, SHADOW FOREIGN MINISTER
MRS. VIDULA NABABSINGH - SHADOW EDUCATION MINISTER
RAMDATH JADDOO - SHADOW MINISTER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

8. DEFEATED PMSD LEADER GAETAN DUVAL ADDRESSED A LETTER TO THE MAURITINA PEOPLE WHICH SEVERAL PAPERS HAVE PUBLISHED.

HE STATES THAT 63 PERCENT OF THE ELECTORATE VOTED AGAINST COMMUNISM, WHICH PROVES THAT HIS EFFORTS WERE NOT IN VAIN. HE SAYS HE ACCEPTS HIS DEFEAT AND THOUGH HIS FIRST INCLINATION WAS TO QUIT POLITICS (TO REGAIN HIS FREEDOM "AFTER TWENTY YEARS OF SLAVERY IN SERVICE OF THE PEOPLE") HE WILL CONTINUE TO STRUGGLE IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE FOR A FREE MAURITIUS.

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A NEWSPAPER MAN WHO TALKED WITH DUVAL YESTERDAY TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER THAT DUVAL RETAINS HIS FIGHTING SPIRIT. HIS PMSD PARTY WILL JOIN WITH THE LABOR PARTY IN A COALITION GOVERNMENT IF ASKED. DUVAL BELIEVES THAT SUCH A GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO GOVERN EFFECTIVELY FOR VERY LONG, SO HE WILL TRY TO CONVINCE RAMGOOLAM TO HOLD ANOTHER GENERAL ELECTION IN TWO OR THREE MONTHS, WITH THE LABOR PARTY AND THE PMSD RUNNING AS A COALITION AGAINST THE MMM. ACCORDING TO DUVAL, BOTH PARTIES WERE OUT-ORGANIZED AT THE GRASS ROOTS LEVEL BY THE MMM. HE BELIEVES THAT THE ELECTION WAS NOT DECIDED ON THE BASIS OF ISSUES BUT ACCORDING TO THE PERSONAL APPEAL OF THE COMPETING CANDIDATES.

9. THERE IS SPECULATION IN THE PRESS THAT IF A LABOR-PMSD COALITION IS FORMED DUVAL MIGHT BE MADE THE ATTORNEY GENERAL. THE OCCUPANT OF THIS POST IS THE ONLY MEMBER OF THE CABINET WHO DOES NOT HAVE TO BE A MEMBER OF THE ASSEMBLY. SEVERAL PAPERS FOCUS ON THE INSTABILITY OF THE POST-ELECTORAL SITUATION AND MENTION THE PROBABILITY OF NEW ELECTIONS WITHIN A YEAR. PARTISANS OF A LABOR-PMSD COALITION BELIEVE THEY COULD DEFEAT THE MMM EASILY IF THEY WORKED TOGETHER.

10. THERE IS SPECULATION THE LABOR PARTY AND THE MMM WILL EACH TRY TO ENGINEER SOME FEFECTIONS FROM THE OTHER IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE A MAJORITY POSTION. IT SEEMS DOUBTFUL THAT SUCH AN EFFORT WOULD IF ONLY FOR THE REASON THAT A DEFECTOR WOULD BE COMMITTING POLITICAL SUICIDE FOR THE NEXT ELECTIONS, WHICH IT IS ANTICIPATED MAY OCCUR QUITE SOON.

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